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SANTA BARBARA • SANTA CRUZ

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED
P.O. BOX 2039
MERCED, CA 95344
(209) 724-4400

August 31, 2004

California Performance Review Commission
Office of the Governor
Constituent Affairs
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Commissioners:

This is to express my support for maintaining the positions of elected county superintendents of schools and county boards of education. I believe that transferring the authority of the superintendent and the board to a regional office will reduce the effectiveness of the County Office of Education in provision of programs, services and support for education and youth in Merced County.

Merced County Office of Education (MCOE) has been a stalwart partner of UC Merced. They, more than most, understand the critical integration between high school and college that helps ensure student success. The importance of their role in preparing students, and making college a natural and easy transition, cannot be overstated. MCOE also works with local government, public service agencies, business, workforce development organizations, and parents to promote the education and welfare of youth in Merced County.

Critical MCOE functions include service to the most needy children; students in court and community schools and students with disabilities. Other programs serving unique populations and needs include regional occupational programs, migrant education, court and community school, environmental education, independent study and a charter school.

Fiscal and academic accountability are also critical functions of MCOE. District budget oversight is comprehensive. Teacher credentialing and training are provided. Administrator training and support are offered. Instructional resources are provided to districts.

Eliminating local elected officials who provide direction and oversight of MCOE activities will reduce the effectiveness, responsiveness and accountability of those functions and will ultimately reduce the quality and quantity of education and youth services in the County. I urge the Commission to reject the CPR recommendation to regionalize K-12 education.

Sincerely,

Carol Tomlinson-Keasey
Chancellor